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Superintendent of Public Documents were vested with optional authority to supply such libraries. If you approve this valuation plan, you ought so to advise your senators and members, especially the latter as they seem to hesitate over its adoption.

In addition to this, however, the bill does provide that the Superintendent of Public Documents may supply such libraries as are suitable custodians of government publications with copies whenever there is a surplus in his office after filling the requests of the regular depositories. This is a rather indefinite provision but it is susceptible of expansion into one of great service to the non-depository libraries.

There are also several provisions in the bill specifically authorizing distribution by the departments of certain valuable publications such as patent specifications, daily commerce reports, coast and geodetic

charts, and geological maps and atlases to libraries. I am rather inclined to believe that the bill will be amended to also provide the daily Congressional Record for every free public library in the United States.

It seems to me, therefore, that the interests of the libraries, both depository and non-depository, have been well cared for in the bill and that the measure will be of much benefit to them when it is enacted into law. I am sure every member of the Joint Committee on Printing has had the welfare of the libraries foremost in his thoughts in the preparation of the bill. That it may be still further improved is undoubtedly true, for we have not yet reached the millennium in legislation. The committee believes, however, that there is enough of merit in the bill to justify fully its prompt enactment by Congress.

#### GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS AS SEEN IN LIBRARIES—WITH A PROGRAM OF BETTERMENTS IN THE PUBLIC PRINTING

BY EDITH E. CLARKE, *Auburn, N. Y.*

From my recent trip to California and back, visiting libraries all the way, and inquiring as to government publications everywhere, and my efforts in different library schools to make the government publications clear to and manageable by young recruits in librarianship, together with my experience in the Documents Office and depository libraries, I have gathered and offer you here a few observations. I will give you first my observations, and follow these with a program of betterments which, if carried out, would, according to my judgment, remedy the difficulties which the libraries experience, and put the national publications and their distribution on a basis of efficiency equal to that of private publishers. And as I shall speak only of the publications of the United States government, let me omit the country, for brevity's sake, in all I have to say.

First, Government publications as seen

in libraries. I will take this up under the three topics: 1) Use; 2) Supply; 3) Treatment in libraries.

1) Use. Diversity is the keyword to the use made of the government publications a) in different parts of the country and b) by different kinds of libraries. a) I have been greatly impressed by the difference between the kinds of publications called for in this part of the country and in the western and Pacific states. And let me say that the libraries of the west that came under my observation do an amount of active reference work with the national publications which puts to the blush some of our less wide-awake eastern libraries. But here in the east the demand is all for works on banking, finance, transportation, manufacturing and the tariff, labor and immigration, and international relations. In the west the call is for publications on Indians, public lands, forestry, conserva-

tion of natural resources, geology, mining, soils, irrigation and reclamation. It is a matter of course that the local interests vary with the locality, agriculture and education being perhaps the most universal.

b) Not only the free public library, but the college library, that is, of the land-grant or agricultural and mechanic arts college, and the state library are also depositories, the last two without liberty of saying whether they wish to be so or not. Consider, if you please, the poor agricultural college library of the newer states, usually in the country, with no general readers, with the need to conserve every penny and every effort for its own restricted field of work. Also, the state library, which one may see in cramped quarters, obliged to pile its U. S. documents in great heaps on the floor, where they could not be used even were readers in the habit of coming to the library who would want to use them. But as depositories, under the present law they are obliged to receive and keep everything. Now, a really live library wishes to have what its readers want, not a lot of dead lumber in book form taking up shelf room. Thus, while on the one hand one cogitates the highly praiseworthy idea which is the basis of the depository system, namely, to secure in every district of our country a complete collection of its publications, one reflects, on the other hand, on the burden of accepting each year one thousand books and pamphlets. The idea will come up, heresy, no doubt, that the depository system has had its trial and been found wanting, because the libraries are not able to accept so much that they do not want to get the little they do want. We are glad to know that the new bill, when it becomes a law, will allow the depository the privilege of selection and rejection, according to its use and needs.

This brings me right up to my second topic, namely, Supply of documents. Here the key words are Elasticity; Supply Gratis to Libraries; and Centralization. A large public library has many branches, and a number of departments separated widely

in floor space. It needs often more than one copy of certain publications, possibly upward of twenty to supply every branch and several departments. The head of the economics department of a large library doing a vast amount of reference work in documents, reports that she has the most difficulty to get enough copies of just those publications which are thrown around to individuals the most lavishly. By means of personal applications from her friends, who turn over to the library the copies received, she manages to keep the library supplied. A university where there was constant friction between the reference desk and the library school giving instruction in government publications as to which should have the single copy of the Checklist, 3d addition, had to pay \$1.50 to get another copy to keep the peace. Of course this is a special work in limited edition, and I must give my cheerful testimony to the scores of other occasions when the Documents Office has responded most liberally to appeals for documents which it could supply free. But, as my friend, the reference department head, sagely says, it would seem right, when the library keeps all it gets for the public to use, and the public daily report, in asking to use a work, "Yes, I had a copy, but I don't know where it has gone to," that the library should have all the copies it can use, and without payment. So much for free and elastic distribution.

As to centralization. A librarian of a non-depository library, whose readers asked for the Guide Book of the Western United States, in four parts, bulletins of the Geological Survey, applied first to the Survey, hoping for free copies. She obtained from this office two of the volumes, with the recommendation to ask the Superintendent of Documents for the other two. These others were on hand, but at a price of a dollar apiece.

I myself, as an individual, but my experience would have been the same had I been applying for a library, have had occasion to seek needed publications in regard to the printing investigation of

1905-11, from the Documents Office, the Joint Printing Committee, Senators Root, Smoot and Wadsworth, and the authors of the publications. And in spite of the cordial help which everybody gave me, each to the extent of his resources, I have not got some of the most important of them yet. But these latter are Congressional, not department publications. We are again glad to know that the new law will make better provision for distribution of material issued by commissions and committees.

Now as to my third topic, the treatment of government publications in libraries. Here the key words are Non-segregation, and the Cataloging in the library catalog, or, at least, the serial check record, of all sets like annual reports, agricultural and educational bulletins, etc. A separate catalog of government publications is not advisable, unless it be a duplication of what is also to be found in the general catalog. I saw in one depository library a catalog of U. S. government publications made according to the advice given in an otherwise helpful and popular guide to government publications. The advice given is that the very small library omit the government authors in cataloging these works. This catalog has omitted them. It was nebulous and misleading to a degree that would have to be seen to be appreciated. The advice given in the guide was addressed to only the smallest libraries. But it seems to the writer that readers even in a village of 500 inhabitants should know that there is in Washington a Department of Agriculture, a Children's Bureau, and a Bureau of Education—the library would not have many other U. S. publications—and the good reading published by these government bodies should be found in the library catalog under their names.

Unwillingness on the part of librarians to keep on their regular shelves, perhaps frequented by the public, and along with other books on the same subject, long sets especially of reports or bulletins, seems general. They prefer to stow them away in an attic or a basement stack, out of sight, but not out of reach when asked for.

This feeling has a basis of good sense, although it does not promote the use of this material. For it is to be remembered that a government report is source material, not a popular exposition of its subject, and the library of from 5,000 to 35,000 volumes deals almost wholly in secondary works. In deference to this feeling I would suggest putting the latest report, or, with bulletins, perhaps a selection of the most popular of the bulletins, on the regular shelves, with a dummy to say that the other issues will be found in the basement.

The adoption of the Checklist classification puts the publications out of the way, and saves the labor of classifying this stuff. But we do not group mankind as men, women, and government officials, and why should we classify our libraries as books on history, science, technology, etc., and—government publications. If the subject material in these works is used, it will be as much an economy in the end to arrange these by subject as so to arrange any other books in the library. In order that these works may be classed according to subject it is desirable to get them out of the entangling series methods of publishing. Of course, in this subject arrangement, the four series that make the Congressional serially numbered set will have, as a set, its subject place, 328.73 in the Decimal Classification. Also, all legitimately made series of bulletins, according to the formula to be given later, will be kept all together, under the broad subject of the set. The Checklist classification is an admirable piece of work. But it does not keep subjects together, and it breaks up continued series by the classification changing every time the organization of the government changes, as the government organization is its basis. In time, this classification will become more and more broken as to continued sets, and less in alphabetical order as to government authors. Those who use it because of the labor it saves, should transfer all the earlier issues of a set to its latest classification number, thus keeping sets together instead of in sections in different places on the shelves.

Now to turn to the program of betterments directed toward removing these difficulties of the libraries, and waste, lack of system, and bibliographical complications in publishing these works. Here also my recommendations issue from personal observation and experience. But every item on the program has been voiced by librarians and investigating commissions again and again as both practicable and desirable. So there is nothing original nor startling about any of them. They consist in applying to these publications the canons of book-making adopted by the best private publishers, and principles of business management without which no private firm could keep its head above water. They also reaffirm, with the step ahead to which our present stage of progress opens the way, the traditional and united policy of the Documents Office and the A. L. A. All are perfectly fit to be put immediately into practical effect, and will work out harmoniously with each other and the present system of things. The only difficulty is to convince Washington of all this. I will first state the program, and then add some explanations and reasons.

#### **Program of betterments in the public printing**

##### **A. Recommendations as to Methods of Publication.**

In order to make government publications easy to understand, easy to handle, and to stop duplication of the same publication in different forms, the following four rules should be enforced:

1. Only one edition of any publication.
2. Exclusion from the two series, Senate Documents and House Documents, of publications of the executive and judicial branches of the government; and these two series to be made up of only the smaller miscellaneous papers on Congressional business, too small to be made independent books or pamphlets.
3. In every branch of the government, including Congress, everything im-

portant and large enough to be published as a distinct and separate work, either in paper covers or as a bound book, to be so published. No works to be tied together into a series, whether as documents, bulletins, circulars, papers, or by any other serial name, unless they fulfil the three following conditions, namely, 1) all to be issued by the same government body; 2) all to have the same general subject material or purpose; 3) all, or almost all, to be so small as to make it convenient to bind several together to make a volume.

4. Duplication caused by reprinting of sub-reports with the report of the higher office, as, for instance, bureau reports as appendixes to department reports, etc., to be minimized by exclusion of sub-reports from the report of the higher office, and separate publication of the sub-report, as far as possible, as has been done with the report of the Bureau of Education. Desirably the department report should have appended to it a list of all subordinate bureaus whose reports for the year have been published.

##### **B. Recommendations as to Administration.**

1. The indexer of the Congressional Record to be trained in subject indexing.
2. The Superintendent of Documents by the terms of the pending bill is to become a Presidential appointee. This will make the position more a political appointment than ever. In the twenty years since the establishment of the office, there have been as many as six Superintendents of Documents, while there have been only eight librarians of Congress since 1802. In view of this the librarians should make a concerted effort to induce the President to ignore political pull in filling the office; to require in the appointee qualifications and some kind of ex-

perience the equivalent of what is demanded in the librarian of a large public library; and to give him the same continuous tenure that is accorded to the Librarian of Congress.

3. An Editorial Board on government publications to be created on the lines of the recommendation of the Committee on Department Methods, or Keep Commission, to meet annually or quarterly, or as needed. This board to include the Superintendent of Documents, another representative of the Government Printing Office, a representative of the Joint Committee on Printing, a representative or representatives of the executive departments, and, as chairman, a person of large experience in printing and publishing who shall not be a government official.

#### C. Recommendations as to Distribution.

1. Distribution by members of Congress, a survival from an earlier period when there was no Documents Office, to be now relinquished by Congress to that office, which was created by it expressly as the central agency for distribution, as soon as Congress can be won over to this action.
2. Of the three distributing agencies, Congress, the publishing body, and the Documents Office, now working inharmoniously and with duplication, Congress is the only one whose distribution is wholly free. Congressional distribution being stopped, of the two agencies left the publishing body should retain only distribution which is free, but which is in furtherance of its work, for propaganda or other sufficient reason in each case. The Documents Office should then assume its full functions as sole distributing agent on the basis of sales to individuals and free gift to libraries open to the public. At present the libraries are bandied about between the three agencies, and frequently pay for publications, and have to resort to

expedients to get all the copies they need for use. The Documents Office should be given such control over the edition, both as to requisitioning the printing of an adequate supply, and the handling of the supply, as to be enabled to answer the needs of the libraries till the last copy is given out.

3. Larger provision for distribution free through this office to non-depository libraries.
4. Greater elasticity in distribution of different publications, a) to different parts of the country and different kinds of libraries, and b) in number of copies to be supplied according to request.
5. A depository of public (private not included) bills and resolutions to be provided, presumably best in the Documents Office, where such bills may be obtained for a certain period, say till the next Congress, by debaters and others interested in them.

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A. Methods of publication. "Only one edition of any publication" has been preached by the Superintendent of Documents ever since the establishment of the office. It has always been the doctrine of the A. L. A., backing up that office. Its necessity was demonstrated beyond a doubt and reiterated again and again in the hearings before the Printing Investigation Commission of 1905-1911. The same is to be said of the exclusion from the Senate and House Documents of publications of the executive and judicial branches of the government. The Printing Investigation Commission, after years of the most searching study, showed their conviction that this was an evil crying for reform when they caused to be passed the joint resolution of March 1, 1907, which provided, among other things, for this exclusion. Congress itself showed its entire willingness to let this exclusion become law. This was the starting point since when the libraries have been getting the executive reports and other publications in the department

or plain title edition. It must be borne in mind that the Document edition is almost invariably a reprint, a later republication of what was already in print. Thus this twenty years worked-for reform was won.

But on Jan. 15, 1908, at the request of certain officials in Washington, the old reprint Document edition was reestablished for their use only. These officials would actually benefit by simplification of the government's publications, except as they would have to unlearn the more involved methods of the early bad system. But it is fair to them to say that they probably have never had demonstrated to them the evils that the reprinting of each of these reports, etc., in the Document edition, even if it be only one copy that is reprinted, entails. These evils, as they have existed since Jan. 15, 1908, are, in part, the following: 1) The Documents Office has to record this added edition in every one of its catalogs and indexes, and to preserve on its shelves a copy of each. The Document Index could be reduced in bulk possibly one third—I speak subject to correction—the other catalogs in less degree, if these reprint editions did not have to be entered; and all this labor saved. 2) There is, of course, the expense of putting to press for another edition. 3) There is, again, the confusion which these reprint editions cause among users of these works, if this reprint edition comes into the hands of the public. 4) There is the infinitely greater confusion caused among all who try to understand these works by finding this edition listed in all the catalogs and indexes, although it is not expected ever to be seen by librarians or the public.

We were, however, getting along on a partial, if not complete basis of economy and efficiency. But, especially in the kaleidoscope of official Washington, as the personnel changes, the lessons of previous investigation and reform are lost to sight, and old abuses continually recur. So in this new bill the proposition is to publish again the executive reports in the old Document edition, sending them in this form to

the libraries, and to abolish the plain title edition. Part of this Document edition is to be bound in a plain title edition binding, part in the Document binding. Here we have over again our two editions, confusing and wasteful. Add to the four objections noted above the following: 1) The Document edition is always a little delayed by its placing in the series, as neither its volume number nor its serial number can be assigned until it is clear what other Documents the set will include. 2) In many libraries both the Document bound copy will be kept to make the Document series complete, and in addition, the plain title edition bound copy in a file under the subject. 3) The vagueness and lack of clear-cut notions as to the government body issuing each publication will still prevail. This is at the root of the difficulties which the national publications present, and can be got rid of by printing each work in one edition only, with its government author clearly stated on title-page and back binding, and by not complicating matters by inclusion in any series whatsoever. 4) And, this objection above all! The two series of Senate and House Documents are miscellaneous in the highest degree as to author, subject, and size. This can not be helped for the great mass of publications filling one leaf or a few pages only which form the majority of the genuine Documents, and the numbered series is, for these, the best way to publish. But among these minor publications, shoving in works of several hundred pages or in several volumes, by another branch of the government, and on subjects which are as disconnected as field guns and the care of a baby, makes the series over-swollen and cumbersome. Private publishers who issue big miscellaneous series, like Everyman's Library, find it desirable to make groups within their series, e. g. Travel, Science, Fiction, etc. The folly of such an amorphous, heterogeneous, unassorted lot of works as made up the old series of Senate and House Documents would never be perpetrated by any publishing house that had its living to make. You cannot distribute

with any economy unless your books are separate from each other, so that you can provide each reader with that only which he wants to read, not with a great mass of all sorts of literature which he must pitchfork over to find the little thing he wants.

Rule 3 is aimed against the tendency of government publishing bodies—it is not confined to Congress alone—to issue in series works that have no connection with each other. In the Department of Agriculture the former separate series of bulletins issued by the Public Roads Office, the Chemistry Bureau, the Biological Survey, the Forestry Service, and other bureaus respectively, were good series. The present series, roads, chemistry, wild animals, forestry, etc., all consolidated into one numbered set, is, I am sure you will all agree with me, a bad series, being too miscellaneous in subject and author.

To Rule 4 I do not care to devote much time, as I hope by degrees it will be wholly reformed, as it has been partially in the last twenty years.

B. Administration. The indexing of the Congressional Record is good, according to all testimony and my experience, so far as entries under persons and committees go. Anyone who has tried to use it for subject material, and who knows what good subject indexing is, will testify that it is impossible to make sure that one has found all the material on a subject, and that the indexer is apparently ignorant of the a b c of scientific subject indexing. Not only are the subject entries of a single issue unsatisfactory, but the continuity and uniformity of subject entries in the whole series of annual indexes, which are desirable, and which one sees in the biennial issues of the Document Catalog, for instance, are lacking. There is a science of subject indexing, and a man who is capable of indexing the Congressional Record should find it not difficult to acquaint himself with it. And we wish we could induce the Joint Committee on Printing to see that he does so.

Recommendations 2 and 3 are too large matters to discuss here. As to 3, it has

been the judgment of some who were intimately acquainted with the management of the Government Printing Office that a commission representing all interests should have charge of that office, of which Congress alone now has charge. In support of this claim, they state the fact that the public printing, originally concerned with work for Congress alone, has broadened out till now only about one-third to one-fourth, a fraction which tends to diminish, of the work of the Government Printing Office, is done for Congress. But this is going beyond the business of librarians, which is with publications only.

C. Distribution. As to distribution, what I have said about the difficulty libraries have in getting free what they want, no more than they want, and as many copies as they want, will apply here. When the pending bill becomes law, all depositories can pick and choose what they shall receive. If, then, every library be made a depository—for even the smallest wants, occasionally a Farmers' Bulletin or a report of the Education Bureau—and the Documents Office be equipped to supply free all demands, we shall have the ideal administration. The responsibility will then fall on the libraries not to be satisfied with the ragged and haphazard assortment of specimens of what the nation is publishing which I have seen in non-depository libraries, the librarian evidently not trusting in her own knowledge enough to get rid of partial sets and odd lots which can never be of any service to her readers. Then every librarian must know and supply her readers with the best the nation gives out. And may I say in this connection that I have found everywhere the Price Lists of the Document Office used and helpful, and I think they are supplying a need very satisfactorily.

The government publications can never have editions adjusted to the demand, so as to stop the selling of tons of them to the junk man, which is like selling good money paid by taxpayers, till indiscriminate free distribution ceases. Congress is the agency that does this indiscriminate



giving. The publishing department distributes free, but for propaganda and popular education, and supposedly on a plan carefully worked out. But the Document Office should be the one centralized agency for sale and—to libraries only—for gifts.

The need for a copy of a pending bill for

use by the debating team or others has been voiced by librarians of schools and colleges many times. It would seem that the proposed plan to supply this need, with its limitations, should not be too much of a burden even for the overworked Document Office.

## COMMENTS ON LIBRARY LEGISLATION

BY WILLIAM H. BRETT, *Librarian, Cleveland Public Library*

The library work of the country is carried on by authority of the state. The reason for this is obviously found in the federal constitution. When the thirteen commonwealths by courage, endurance, some good luck, and some aid from outside, had achieved their independence, they united to form the federal Union, surrendering to the central government certain powers, and naturally retaining those which were not surrendered, among these being the right and duty of educating the people. Consequently, all educational work carried on by direct taxation and being in any degree compulsory is carried on by authority of the state. While the state government does certain things directly affecting and benefiting the whole state, the greater part of the library work of the country is local, being established for the benefit and carried on largely at the expense of various geographical units, the principal ones being the county, the municipality and the school district, and occasionally the township. The distinction between municipality and city school district is, however, not one of territory, but of organization, the same people being in one case organized for political and business purposes, and in the other for educational purposes.

In many states, the laws provide also for a coöperation between these various library districts, as permitting a municipality to coöperate with the surrounding township or with adjoining townships; permitting two or more townships to coöperate; per-

mitting the extension of municipal or county; or even permitting adjoining school-district libraries throughout the counties to coöperate.

Most public libraries of the country belong to one of three important divisions, although there are other variations. These divisions are, the municipal library, the school-district library, and the association library or proprietary library, which is subsidized by the library district in which it stands and is made a free public library. This latter class includes libraries belonging to a great variety of associations, some of them being formed for other purposes as well as merely for the organization of the library. A fourth division, the county library, is of recent years becoming very much more important, though not yet nearly as numerous as the other classes.

As I have already indicated, the municipal and the school-district library are usually alternatives, the school-district library usually including the same territory, so that it is simply a question as to whether the people of a certain town or city will maintain their library through their organization as a city or through their organization as a school district.

There is a great amount of library legislation in the statute books of the various states relating to all of these and other classes of libraries, enough to fill many volumes. The principal subjects of legislation are, the government of libraries, their initiation and organization, the acquisition of library property, both real and personal,